ties that provide bridges between groups. Others focus on ties within groups that allow for the transmission of cooperative values and for the enforcement of social norms. Both kinds of structures have implications for the maintenance of social order.

REFERENCES

24.
The Web of Group-Affiliations

GEORG SIMMEL, 1922

AFFILIATION WITH TWO GROUPS OF DIFFERENT TYPES

The unity of a group . . . grows out of a more primitive type, but need not always be of a more rational character. The consequences for the external position as well as for the internal make-up of the individual will have a special character if both types of establishing unity are founded upon equally deep-seated causes that lie beyond the control of the individual.

The Australian aborigines, whose cultural position is very primitive, live in small, rather close-knit tribes. But the entire population is divided into five gens or totemic associations in such a way that members of the various gentes are found in each tribe and each gens extends over several tribes. Within the tribe the members of the same totemic association do not engage in collective action. Rather, the fact of their membership becomes an element in all other groups, however defined, and as such these members of the totemic association constitute an extended family. If in a fight between two hordes the members of the same totem meet, they avoid each other and seek out another opponent, which is likewise reported of the Mortlach Islanders. Sexual relations take place between men and women according to the conditions of the gentes, even though they are members of different tribes and have never met in any other way. Those wretched people are quite incapable of engaging in rational, collective action, properly so-called. But by belonging to two such sharply divided groups [the gens and the tribe] they must experience an enrichment of their lives, a tension and a doubling of their vitality, which they could probably not attain otherwise.

In modern family life a somewhat similar affiliation [with two divided groups] is often established by virtue of the solidarity among members of the same sex, though the content and the effect [of this affiliation] are of a very

different kind. For example, a mother's instincts will cause her to side with her son as her own kin on occasions when she is drawn into the disputes between himself and his wife. But on another occasion her instincts may cause her to take the side of her daughter-in-law as a member of her own sex. To belong to the same sex is one of the causes for collective action, which pervades social life perennially, and which intermingles with all other causes of collective action in the most varied ways and degrees. The fact that two persons are of the same sex will, as a rule, act as an organic and natural [cause of collective action] in contrast to which other causes [of collective action] have something of the individual, intentional, and conscious about them. However, in the case referred to, one may sense perhaps that the relationship between mother and son is the natural and effective one, while the solidarity of one woman with another is of a secondary and deliberate nature, which is more significant in an abstract than in an existential sense. Yet, to be of the same sex is sometimes a cause of solidarity, which is peculiar in the sense that it is primary, fundamental, and independent of all arbitrary decisions. Yet, this solidarity can become effective only through mediation, reflection and conscious striving. Hence, these much later and accidental causes function in fact as the first and unavoidable cause of group-formation.

Organic and Rational Criteria of Group-Formation

In relatively uncomplicated situations age groups may function as a sociological criterion and may become a basis of division for the entire group. Like the division between the sexes, age groups stand midway between the organic and the rational. For example, in Sparta around 200 B.C. political parties were designated as the elders, the young men, and the youngs. Similarly, among different primitive peoples one finds men organized in age-groups, each of which has a special social significance and a special way of life. The basis of this solidarity is entirely personal and impersonal at the same time.

Obviously, age-groups provide such a basis of solidarity only when the culture is still without an extensive intellectual life. For this would immediately foster the unfolding of individual intellectual differences, of differences in the development of ideas, of political parties depending on ideologies. And as a result individuals of quite different age-groups would feel that they belong together. It is, indeed, this lack of an acquired education which is one of the reasons why youth as such shows a certain solidarity, why young people are attracted to one another much more so than are older people. Youths are often surprisingly indifferent towards each other's individuality.

The division by age-groups is a cause, though an extremely awkward cause, of group-formation, which combines personal and objective criteria. The organic and rational causes of group-formation, whose contrast is usually emphasized, are here brought together. A purely physiological aspect of individuals, their age, becomes a basis for joint action. Individuals are consciously brought together on this basis. Age is an entirely natural and personal fact which here works as a completely objective principle. It is understandable that this fact gains great importance for the social structure of primitive peoples, since age is relieved of all elements of caprice, since the fact of age is immediately apparent and as such readily determines one's outlook on life.

Group-affiliations which are formed according to objective criteria constitute a superstructure which develops over and above those group-affiliations which are formed according to natural, immediately given criteria. One of the simplest examples is the original cohesion of the family-group which is modified in such a way that the individual member introduces his family into other groups. One of the most complex examples is the "republic of scholars" which is in part an intellectual and in part a real association of all persons, who join in the pursuit of such a highly general goal as knowledge. In all other respects these scholars belong to the most varied groups—with regard to their nationality, their personal and special interests, their social position, and so on.

The period of the Renaissance demonstrated most clearly the power of intellectual and educational interests to bring together in a new community like-minded people from a large variety of different groups. Humanistic interests broke down the medieval isolation of social groups and of estates. They gave to people who represented the most diverse points of view and who often remained faithful to the most diverse occupations, a common interest in ideas and in knowledge. This common interest, whether one of active pursuit or of passive appreciation, cut across all previously established forms and institutions of medieval life. Humanism at that time entered the experience of all peoples and groups from the outside as something that was equally strange to all. And this very fact made it possible for Humanism to become a common area of interest for them all, or at any rate for certain people among them.

For example, the idea prevailed that all things famous belonged together. This is shown by the collections of biographies which began to appear in the 14th century. These biographies described in a single work people of excellence from many fields, whether they were theologians, or artists, statesmen or philologists. In their way, the secular rulers gave recognition to this new rank-order, which involved a new analysis and synthesis of social groups. Robert of Naples befriends Petrarch and makes him a gift of his own purple cape.

Two hundred years later this social action has shed its lyre guise and has assumed a more objective and strictly limited form. Francis I of France wanted to make that social group, which was concerned exclusively with the higher learning, completely independent and autonomous even in relation to the
universities. These universities were charged with the education of theologians and jurists. But Francis I proposed a separate academy, whose members would devote themselves to investigation and teaching without having any practical purpose in mind. It was a consequence of this separation of what is intellectually significant from every other value that the Venetian Senate accompanied the extradition of Giordano Bruno with this letter to the Papal Court. Bruno was one of the worst heretics, it said, he had done the most reprehensible things, he had led a dissolute, even a devilish life. In other respects, however, he was one of the most distinguished intellects that could be imagined, a man of rare learning and spiritual greatness.

The restlessness and the adventurous spirit of the Humanists, their often unstable and unreliable character, were in keeping with the independence of the intellect, which was the central focus of their lives. This independence made them indifferent to all other obligations usually incumbent upon men. The individual humanist spent his life in a colorful variety of life-situations. This way of life was symbolic of the movement of Humanism, which embraced the poor scholar and the monk, the powerful General and the brilliant Duchess, in a single framework of intellectual interests. Thereby the way was opened for a most important, further differentiation of the social structure, though there are precedents for such a development in antiquity.

Criteria derived from knowledge came to serve as the basis of social differentiation and group-formation. Up to the Renaissance, social differentiation and group-formation had been based either on criteria of self-interest (economic, military, and political in a broad or narrow sense), or of emotion (religious), or of a mixture of both (familial). Now, intellectual and rational interests came to form groups, whose members were gathered from many other social groups. This is a striking example of the general trend, that the formation of groups, which has occurred more recently, often bears a rational character, and that the substantive purpose of these groups is the result of conscious reflection and intelligent planning. Thus, secondary groups, because of their rational formation, give the appearance of being determined by a purpose, since their affairs revolve around intellectually articulated interests.

**Multiple Group-Affiliations which are not in conflict**

The number of different social groups in which the individual participates is one of the earmarks of culture. The modern person belongs first of all to his parental family, then to his family of procreation and thereby also to the family of his wife. Beyond this he belongs to his occupational group, which often involves him in several interest-groups. For example, in an occupation that embraces both supervisory and subordinate personnel, each person partici-
in so far as this was the case, and the fact that the members were individually differentiated in other respects was irrelevant. This way of doing things was extended to alliances between different groups, but these groups were regarded even then as equal powers within the new alliance. The individual as such was not a fact in such an alliance; hence his indirect participation in it did not add an individuating element to his personality. Nevertheless, as will be discussed later, this was the transitional step from the medieval type to the modern type of group-formation. The medieval group in the strict sense was one which did not permit the individual to become a member in other groups, a rule which the old guilds and the early medieval corporations probably illustrate most clearly. The modern type of group-formation makes it possible for the isolated individual to become a member in whatever number of groups he chooses. Many consequences resulted from this.

GROUP-AFFILIATIONS AND THE INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITY

The groups with which the individual is affiliated constitute a system of coordinates, as it were, such that each new group with which he becomes affiliated circumscribes him more exactly and more unambiguously. To belong to any one of these groups leaves the individual considerable leeway. But the larger the number of groups to which an individual belongs, the more improbable is it that other persons will exhibit the same combination of group-affiliations, that these particular groups will "intersect" once again [in a second individual]. Concrete objects lose their individual characteristics as we subsume them under a general concept in accordance with one of their attributes. And concrete objects regain their individual characteristics as other concepts are emphasized under which their several attributes may be subsumed. To speak Platonically, each thing has a part in as many ideas as it has manifold attributes, and it achieves thereby its individual determination. There is an analogous relationship between the individual and the groups with which he is affiliated.

A concrete object with which we are confronted has been called the synthesis of perceptions. And each object has a more enduring configuration, so to speak, the more various the perceptions are, which have entered into it. Similarly as individuals, we form the personality out of particular elements of life, each of which has arisen from, or is interwoven with, society. This personality is subjectivity par excellence in the sense that it combines the elements of culture in an individual manner. There is here a reciprocal relation between the subjective and the objective. As the person becomes affiliated with a social group, he surrenders himself to it. A synthesis of such subjective affiliations creates a group in an objective sense. But the person also regains his individuality, because his pattern of participation is unique; hence the fact of multiple group-participation creates in turn a new subjective element. Causal determination of, and purposive actions by, the individual appear as two sides of the same coin. The genesis of the personality has been interpreted as the point of intersection for innumerable social influences, as the end-product of heritages derived from the most diverse groups and periods of adjustment. Hence, individuality was interpreted as that particular set of constituent elements which in their quality and combination make up the individual. But as the individual becomes affiliated with social groups in accordance with the diversity of his drives and interests, he thereby expresses and returns what he has "received," though he does so consciously and on a higher level.

As the individual leaves his established position within one primary group, he comes to stand at a point at which many groups "intersect." The individual as a moral personality comes to be circumscribed in an entirely new way, but he also faces new problems. The security and lack of ambiguity in his former position gives way to uncertainty in the conditions of his life. This is the sense of an old English proverb which says: he who speaks two languages is a knave. It is true that external and internal conflicts arise through the multiplicity of group-affiliations, which threaten the individual with psychological tensions or even a schizophrenic break. But it is also true that multiple group-affiliations can strengthen the individual and reenforce the integration of his personality. Conflicting and integrating tendencies are mutually reinforcing. Conflicting tendencies can arise just because the individual has a core of inner unity. The ego can become more clearly conscious of this unity, the more he is confronted with the task of reconciling within himself a diversity of group-interests. The effect of marriage on both spouses is that they belong to several families; this has always been a source of enrichment, a way of expanding one's interests and relationships but also of intensifying one's conflicts. These conflicts may induce the individual to make internal and external adjustments, but also to assert himself energetically.

In primitive clan-organizations the individual would participate in several groups in such a way that he belonged to the kinship or totemic group of his mother, but also to the narrower, familial or local association of his father. Now these simple people are not equal to conflicts such as those just mentioned, which is basically due to the fact that they lack a firm awareness of themselves as personalities. With peculiar purposefulness these two kinds of association are therefore so differently arranged that they do not encroach upon each other. Relationships on the maternal side have a more ideal, spiritual nature, whereas on the paternal side they are real, material and directly effective. In the case of the Australian aborigines, i.e., the Hottentots, and among many other hunting tribes, maternal kinship, and similarly the totemic association, do not constitute a basis for community-living. They have no effect.
on daily life, but only on festive occasions of deep significance, such as marriage ceremonies and ceremonies occasioned by death and blood revenge. The last of these has an ideal, abstract character in the lives of the primitive peoples. The totemic association is transmitted through maternal descent and, therefore, it is often scattered through many tribes and hordes. It is held together only by common taboos on food and common ceremonials, and particularly by means of special names and special symbols on weapons. On the other hand, the paternal kinship-relations encompass all of daily life, waging war, alliances, inheritance, hunting, and so on. They do not have these taboos and symbols and do not need them, because the bond of a community in one locality and the convergence of their direct interests provide the basis for a sense of group-cohesion. At this stage, each connection which is not local usually assumes a more ideal character. It is the sign of a higher social development that group-cohesion can transcend local ties and yet be thoroughly realistic and concrete. But if the individual in a primitive tribe belongs to both the paternal-local group and to the maternal clan, these groups must be separated from each other in terms of the distinctly concrete or distinctly abstract values which they embody. Given the undifferentiated character of the primitive mind, this separation is a precondition for the possibility that the same individual belongs to both groups.

25.

The Strength of Weak Ties

MARK S. GRANOVETTER, 1973

A fundamental weakness of current sociological theory is that it does not relate micro-level interactions to macro-level patterns in any convincing way. Large-scale statistical, as well as qualitative, studies offer a good deal of insight into such macro phenomena as social mobility, community organization, and political structure. At the micro level, a large and increasing body of data and theory offers useful and illuminating ideas about what transpires within the confines of the small group. But how interaction in small groups aggregates to form large-scale patterns eludes us in most cases.

I will argue, in this paper, that the analysis of processes in interpersonal networks provides the most fruitful micro-macro bridge. In one way or another, it is through these networks that small-scale interaction becomes translated into large-scale patterns, and that these, in turn, feed back into small groups.

Sociometry, the precursor of network analysis, has always been curiously peripheral—invisible, really—in sociological theory. This is partly because it has usually been studied and applied only as a branch of social psychology; it is also because of the inherent complexities of precise network analysis. We have had neither the theory nor the measurement and sampling techniques to move sociometry from the usual small-group level to that of larger structures. While a number of stimulating and suggestive studies have recently moved in this direction (Burt 1957; Mayer 1961; Milgram 1967; Boissevain 1968; Mitchell 1969), they do not treat structural issues in much theoretical detail. Studies which do so usually involve a level of technical complexity appropriate to such forbidding sources as the Bulletin of Mathematical Biophysics, where the original motivation for the study of networks was that of developing a theory of


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